

2013 FEDERAL EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNER

Category 7 - Outstanding Trades and Crafts Employee

Larry Koniecki

Edward Hines Jr. Veterans Hospital

FACTOR I - JOB COMPETENCE

Mr. Koniecki has supervised the Boiler Plant at Hines for 9 years. He manages and oversees critical and vital boiler plant operations with only five (5) boiler plant operators to run a 24 hours/365 days rotating shift schedule. He personally fills in for staff that are out sick or out due to family emergencies. Mr. Koniecki's dedication is evidenced by his ability to be a working supervisor, providing manpower as well as supervision during his shift. He is a team player and dedicated to making the Hines Boiler Plant the epitome of safety and efficiency. The Boiler Plant has a perfect safety record for FY12 with no on-the-job injuries. The Boiler Plant under his watch efficiently provides water, heat and steam to 3 million sq ft of space. He is directly responsible for providing safe drinking water to the Hines and Loyola Campuses. As a leader he has demonstrated the ability to work with limited resources, an aged facility and limited manpower to ensure that the Hines VA Hospital meets its goal to provide the best patient care.

Mr. Koniecki learned the boiler plant trade in the military and has continued the education required to be an outstanding Boiler Plant Operator in VISN 12. He is excellent at trouble shooting and has saved the hospital money by eliminating the need for contracting repairs. Hines chlorinates water which is received from City of Chicago. Mr. Koniecki provides the knowledge and experience to oversee this extremely dangerous process.

Mr. Koniecki received an excellent performance rating in 2012 partially based on technical support for rebuilding of the boiler plant at Hines during 2012(outlined below) and his support for the renovation of the Joliet Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) during 2012 (outlined below).

He received an award from the Hospital Director for providing exemplary leadership during a time of crisis when the Hines Boiler Plant flooded. His quick thinking and actions prevented loss of lives and saved the hospital dollars and resources.

In 2012 Hines VA purchased a 60, 000 square feet facility to house the CBOC in Joliet IL, Mr. Koniecki was called on to provide technical assistance for design review of a new boiler system, as well as lead the operations team in establishing maintenance and procedures. His technical expertise was invaluable to integrating an older building with a new boiler system. He spent many weeks at Joliet reviewing systems and preparing documents. Meanwhile he continued to supervise the boiler plant at Hines.

Mr. Koniecki developed a Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasures (SPCC) program which was recognized by VISN 12 Safety Officer and GEMS (Green Environmental Management) consultants that significantly improved the process. The Hines Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasures serves as a VISN model.

He has contributed to Green Environmental Management (GEMS) by controlling boiler plant air emissions and by increasing the use of natural gas versus diesel oil fuel. Thus, saving money and contributing to the GEMS program.

FACTOR II - IMPACT

Mr. Koniecki has been the face of Hines for many years when interacting with neighboring towns and villages. He interacts with the Village of Westchester and Broadview Township which provide water and sewage services through Metropolitan Water and Reclamation. He has settled many issues without higher authority by recognizing potential problems and making calls to change course of action. He is the Contracting Officer Representative for Legionella Testing and Load Bank Testing. He schedules the tests

and reviews test results of the domestic water system which is necessary for certification by the State of Illinois.

He is currently a member of St Joseph's Church in Marseilles, Illinois where he volunteers and supports special events. He is a strong advocate for our nation's veterans and supports the Memorial of Fallen Soldiers Freedom Run in Marseilles, Illinois. This memorial is dedicated to commemorating the servicemen and women who have lost their lives in worldwide conflicts since 1979.

Mr. Koniecki is a part of Facilities Management Service at Hines VA Hospital. He is known for being dependable and reliable. He sets a great example of leadership for the service.

FACTOR III - SPECIAL EFFORTS

Mr. Koniecki was put to the ultimate Boiler Plant Operator test when Hines Boiler Plant experienced devastating flood in 2010 as the Des Plaines River came over the banks and flooded the Hines campus. The Boiler Plant was submerged in water and left in a non-operating status. He was able to prevent a complete shutdown of the entire hospital by working tirelessly to keep the campus steam and drinking water safe. He procured a temporary boiler and began work on replacing the existing boilers. Since the flood he has spent countless hours working with Architectural Engineering Firms reviewing drawings, environmental assessments, determining how best to demolish the old in preparation for building a new plant. During 2012 he proved to be invaluable at providing technical guidance in the design of a new 60 million dollar conventional boiler plant at Hines. The boiler plant, with co-generation capacity, will use steam to produce electricity. When the boiler plant is completed in 2014, Hines will be the proud owner of a new boiler plant with many green features. Mr. Koniecki has not wavered from his dedication to see a new safe, efficient, secure boiler plant at Hines.